

**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Criminal Investigation Division
Investigative Activity Report**

Case Number:

1000-0494

Case Title:

Cooke Aquaculture Fish Farm Release

Reporting Office:

Seattle, WA, Area Office

Subject of Report:

2018-03-13 Phone Interview of [REDACTED]

Activity Date:

March 13, 2018

Reporting Official and Date:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

15-MAR-2018, Signed by: [REDACTED]

Approving Official and Date:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
21-MAR-2018, Approved by: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SYNOPSIS

On March 13, 2018, [REDACTED] conducted a phone interview with [REDACTED], a research professor with the University of Washington, in Seattle, Washington regarding her knowledge of the Cooke Aquaculture Atlantic Salmon release in August of 2017.

DETAILS

On March 13, 2018, I conducted a phone interview with [REDACTED], [REDACTED] [REDACTED], in Seattle, Washington regarding her knowledge of the Cooke Aquaculture Atlantic Salmon release in August of 2017. After being notified of the identity of the interviewing agent and the nature of the interview, [REDACTED] in substance, provided the following information:

BACKGROUND:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] She is also part of the local interagency working group for aquaculture and is very familiar with aquaculture. She is considered an expert in mussels and other types of marine growth.

She supports aquaculture and wants to see an expansion of the aquaculture field. She supports aquaculture when it is done in a responsible way. She is also quite familiar with the hydrodynamics involved in the net pen aquaculture business as she is part of the interagency working group.

She was in the Seattle area when the Cooke Aquaculture Atlantic Salmon release occurred and is familiar with the details which appeared in local newspapers.

MUSSELS AND MARINE GROWTH:

She is considered an expert in mussel life spans. The average mussel takes between six and eight months to grow to market size. An adult mussel is between three and five centimeters long.

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Mussels can move very little through their lifespan. At the beginning of their lifespan, mussel larvae are moving through the water and are approximately the size of a grain of sand. For between three and six weeks the larvae are feeding on algae in the ocean water. The mussel larvae then attach themselves to a rock, pier or net and begin their growth. After attaching to its desired location, a mussel will move less than a meter in its lifetime. One or two weeks after attachment, the larvae begin to grow its outer shells. Typically, this lifecycle begins in the spring of the year.

COOKE NET PEN #2:

With the Cooke Aquaculture release in mind, it is her opinion that if the company thoroughly cleaned net pen #2 in late July of 2017, then the mussels would only be approximately one-half of a centimeter by the time the nets were removed in late August of 2017. If the adult mussels were removed from the net pen, they would not be able to crawl to another structure and reattach itself. Even if the mussel were knocked off the net pen and then the net pen was on the ocean floor, the mussels could not crawl over to the net and reattach themselves.

If EPA CID were to provide her with pictures or actual netting which was used by Cooke Aquaculture, she would be able to calculate the biomass per unit of mesh on the net. She can calculate the percentage of coverage of the net and what percentage of the area is covered in mussels versus open netting.

Mussels and other marine growth, such as kelp, help to effectively close net openings and cause significant drag underwater. In her opinion, she believes that ocean kelp was also a significant problem for net pen #2 as this type of marine growth can quickly grow back, once it has been removed. She believes that if the net pens had many mussels on them when they were removed, they started growing at least between six and eight months prior to the Atlantic Salmon release in August of 2017.

AGENT NOTE: At the beginning of the call, Regional Criminal Enforcement Counsel Karla Perrin discussed [REDACTED] background with [REDACTED] to ensure no conflicts of interest. Perrin found none and I conducted the interview.